



The 2nd Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America grants citizens the right to keep and bear arms. With that right comes great responsibility for those who choose to exercise that right. Failing to exercise good judgment and safe firearms handling skills could result in great tragedy, civil liability, and criminal culpability.

Accidental firearms related injuries and deaths can be greatly minimized if not completely eliminated by following a few simple, but rigid safety rules.

### The Four General Firearms Safety Rules

1. **TREAT ALL GUNS AS IF THEY WERE LOADED.** Handling a firearm casually when it is “unloaded” during transportation, cleaning, and use is a sure recipe for disaster. The frequent response, “I didn’t know it was loaded!” is of no comfort to those affected by the consequences of a negligently discharged firearm.

2. **NEVER POINT THE GUN AT ANYTHING YOU DO NOT INTEND TO DESTROY.** If a firearm is discharged unintentionally, but the firearm is pointed in a safe direction the danger can be greatly minimized.

3. **KEEP YOUR FINGER OFF THE TRIGGER UNTIL YOUR SIGHTS ARE ON-TARGET AND YOU HAVE DECIDED TO FIRE.** This is one of the most commonly violated of all the safety rules. When violated along with Rule #2, it frequently leads to disaster. When a human being is startled, loses balance, or performs certain physically demanding tasks, there is

an unavoidable physical response. If, at that time, the finger is in a position where it can touch the trigger, the weapon will fire. To minimize this risk, when not firing the weapon, the shooter must "index" the trigger finger above the trigger guard alongside the receiver.

**4. BE SURE OF THE TARGET, AS WELL AS THE SURROUNDINGS, AND BEYOND.** When intentionally or unintentionally shooting a firearm, the shooter is responsible for the bullet or shotgun pellets. Before shooting you should ask yourself a few simple questions like:

- "Where is my hunting partner?"
- "What is behind my target?"
- "Will this bullet endanger persons or property?"

## Storage

Firearms accidents in the home can be prevented simply by making sure that firearms are kept unloaded and safely stored, with ammunition secured in a separate location.

### Safe & Secure Storage Options

- Firearm Locks: Utilizing a firearms safety lock will make the gun inoperable. Some gun manufactures now utilize integral locks in the firearm. You can also purchase trigger or cable action locks. This option does not deter theft of movement.
- Free Action locks are available at the Pullman Police Department. They are provided through a program called Project Child Safe sponsored by the National Shooting Sports Foundation and funded by a grant from the Department of Justice. [Project ChildSafe - Putting a lock on safety in your community](#)

- Firearm Cases: This option also does not deter theft or movement of the firearm, but can prevent child and casual access.
- Firearm Safe: This option is much more costly, but does give the home owner the added benefit of theft and fire protecting. The State of Washington also provides a sales tax exemption for qualified gun safe purchases as an incentive. RCW 82.08.832

## Children and Firearms

It is a sad fact that children are injured and killed by firearms that are stored in the home. In a home where guns are kept, the degree of safety a child has rests squarely on the child's parents.

Parents who accept the responsibility to learn, practice and teach gun safety rules will ensure their child's safety to a much greater extent than those who do not. Parental responsibility does not end, however, when the child leaves the home.

According to federal statistics, there are guns in approximately half of all U.S. households. Even if no one in your family owns a gun, chances are that someone you know does. Your child could come in contact with a gun at a neighbor's house, when playing with friends, or under other circumstances outside your home.

It is critical for your child to know what to do if he or she encounters a firearm anywhere, and it is the parents' responsibility to provide that training.

What should you teach your child about gun safety, especially if they aren't familiar with the four general firearms safety rules?

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### **STOP!**

- **Don't Touch.**
- **Leave the Area.**
- **Tell an Adult.**

For more information about children and gun safety visit the NRA's website, [Eddie Eagle Safety Program](#)